Fitness first at UTM - Page 5

UTM's award-winning college newspaper

thepacer

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January 26, 2017 | The Independent Voice of the University of Tennessee at Martin | Volume 89, Issue 10

Women gather to march in solidarity

Elysia Duke
Guest Writer

Millions of women gathered in Washington and in other cities across the country on Saturday to show their anger and express solidarity.

One such demonstration was held in Nashville. This event was attended by several members of the UTM faculty, including Dr. Michelle Merwin, Dr. Renee LaFleur, Dr. Chara Van Horn, Dr. Liz Aleksander and Caroline Ideus.

"The solidarity amongst the people in the march, we can feel it, we were there for a purpose," said LaFleur. "Everyone has their own reason to march and our theme was ... that a foundation of American values is a right to dissent.

"I march for my daughter to make the world a better place for her," she said.

Ideus said that her first impression was that "way more people" showed up than she expected.

"It gave me the momentum to continue on with communicating with local politicians and being active locally and nationally," said Ideus.

Aleksander said she felt connected to others in the area in a way she had not been before.

"Now that the march is over, we're making plans to lobby our legislators so that the compassionate voice of the march doesn't get drowned out," said Aleksander.

Aleksander said that it was also heartening to see students from rural West Tennessee at the march or asking about it afterwards.

A highlight of the Nashville march was a poem titled "Nasty Woman," written and read by 19 year-old Nina Donovan of Franklin. Donovan's poem was also read by actress Ashley Judd at the Washington march.

Demonstrators from all over the country arrived in Washington in buses, caravans, and packed the Metro transit system near the National Mall to hear from women's rights activists, lawmakers and celebrities. The march began Saturday along Constitution Avenue towards the Washington Monument.

Protesters addressed several issues during the march, such as Trump's comments towards women during his campaign. New GOP leaders in Washington targeting Planned Parenthood and abortion rights were also addressed. Protesters additionally spoke out about LGBTQ and disability rights.

Renee LaFleur takes a selfie in front of Chara Van Horn, Nicole Crist and Michelle Marks Merwin at the Women's March in Nashville. | ***Photo Credit / Renee LaFleur***

Messages flooded social media as mothers and daughters were seen boarding flights, buses, and other forms of transportation into Washington to exercise their First Amendment rights.

"This is the upside of the downside," activist Gloria Steinem said to the crowd Saturday morning. "This is an outpouring of energy and true democracy like I have never seen in my very long life."

Celebrities present at the Washington march included Judd, America Ferrera, Cher, Lena Dunham, Katy Perry, Scarlett Johansson, Alicia Keys and Madonna.

"We march today for the moral core of this nation, against which our new president is waging a war," Ferrera said to the crowd. "Our dignity, our character, our rights have all been under attack and a platform of hate and division assumed power yesterday. But the president is not America. ... We are America and we are here to stay."

According to The Washington Post, massive crowds caused some problems. D.C. Police reported that they made no arrests related to the march.

Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton was not present at any of the marches, but tweeted a response to those assembled.

"Thanks for standing, speaking & marching for our values @womensmarch," read Clinton's tweet. "Important as ever. I truly believe we're always stronger together."

State lawmakers tackle tough issues

Shanell Hacker
Staff Writer
Rachel Moore
Co-News Editor

With the election and inauguration of Donald Trump as the 45th president of the United States, many lawmakers in Tennessee have begun work on legislation to accommodate proposed changes under the new administration.

Trump signed an executive order on his first day in office that seeks the prompt repeal of the Affordable Care Act. If the repeal is successful, it will not take effect until 2018, at the time of midterm elections. However, with the executive order on the table and a continued plea for repeal among the electorate, Tennessee lawmakers are seeking alternative pieces of legislation to bring health care back to the state's control.

Republican Gov. Bill Haslam first received opposition to his Insure Tennessee proposal in 2015; however, with the change in administration, all discussions are back on the table. Insure Tennessee seeks to push control of health care and health insurance into the hands of state government as opposed to the federal government.

Haslam released a 19-page letter to House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, answering questions "regarding the health insurance and Medicaid challenges and opportunities in Tennessee."

In his letter, Haslam draws attention to states being able to create a more competitive market, as well as having tighter rein on controlling levy rates of individual plans. He expresses concern about any move that could add uncertainty to the individual market or encourages health insurers to remove themselves from the 2018 exchange.

Haslam's work on health care reform is only the beginning of changes among lawmakers.

On Tuesday Jan. 17, 2017, House Bill 61 was introduced and filed by Republican Representative Courtney Rogers. The bill would reduce some of the background check requirements during gun sale transactions between licensed gun manufacturers, importers and dealers. Transfers involving licensed gun manufacturers,

See **Laws**, Page 4

Scholarship program needs more student awareness

Kristina Shaw
Managing Editor

College debt remains a national issue, and students are always looking for more money.

According to the Institute for College Access and Success, the average debt of a 2015 graduate from a Tennessee public or private four-year institution is $26,083. For college graduates from UTM, this number is $28,701. This sum looms over college students to follow them for a significant amount of time and trickle down into many aspects of life.

One way to alleviate the stress and negative consequences of student debt is through scholarships. Many forms of tuition assistance are available, but they can be scattered among departments and difficult to find.

Aviator scholarship application deadline: Feb. 1

UTM is working to solve this problem locally through Scholarship Aviator, a software program by Academic Works that matches qualified students

See **Aviator**, Page 4

Inside
Viewpoints.....Pg 2
News.....Pg 4
Arts & Entertainment.....Pg 5
Sports.....Pg 7

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Next print issue February 9

Viewpoints

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EDITORIAL

Media not entirely to blame for fake news

From the past election season to now, our country and its social media are fighting the epidemic known as fake news.

People log in to Facebook or Twitter and see headlines on their newsfeed such as "Penguins now responsible for cancer," or "The Second Amendment threatened by preschoolers." Of course, these are ridiculous headlines, but more people are able to fabricate fake news that can easily be believable if readers don't spend an extra 10 seconds researching it on Google.

Also, who are the readers blaming? The guy in his basement who bought a public domain site to write a fake article? No, people are blaming the media, not only for fake news, but also for credible information that some people can't or won't accept as fact. So, how do we fix it?

First, understand that fake news can be easily sorted out by simply taking a minute out of your time to research what you read. Websites such as Snopes or Politifact are great at debunking myths and telling the real, objective truth.

Second, when reading news, be aware that some sites have an obvious bias toward one side or the other. Traditional media is usually good at being objective without infusing their own political agenda into their coverage. Some particularly good examples include foreign news outlets, especially British newspapers such as The Guardian or The Independent. On the other hand, if stories from other organizations that contain the words "liberal" or "conservative" in their names, they often contain unsubstantiated opinions and, in many cases, facts skewed to benefit the publication's preferred side.

Third, if you really want to hear differing opinions without political correctness and raw truth, Youtube and online streaming services have news shows that can easily quench that thirst. The Philip DeFranco Show is notably one of the best shows for this after receiving the "Best Show of the Year" and "Best News/Culture" at the 2016 Streamy Awards. He often takes current events, gives viewers the lowdown on what's happening, tells his honest opinion and encourages viewers to comment their opinions and views on different stories. Others include Last Week Tonight with John Oliver and The Young Turks.

Lastly, we at The Pacer want you to know that the only agenda we and other media outlets with traditional values have is to report news and inform the public. Sure, we have fact-based opinion pieces in the Viewpoints section, but the main goal is to tell the truth and give out facts, whether we like it or not. To blame the media for purposely giving out fake news is like blaming a dog for giving you allergies. Sure, you're allergic to dogs, but you have the responsibility to realize that allergy and take steps to avoid it.

While the fake news epidemic is still going, happy researching and may the credible facts and statistics be ever in your favor.

COLUMN

UTM's newest changes to its site and app

Rebekah Cotten
Staff Writer

If you've recently logged onto your portal, you may have noticed there is a new tab.

Canvas is the new form of Blackboard that will hold assignments, grades and various other things, much like Blackboard does now. Canvas has a sleek layout, making everything easier to find and much less of a crowded mess; whereas on Blackboard, everything is crammed onto the home page.

While many professors are still using Blackboard rather than Canvas, until the transition is made there will be no sure way of knowing if Canvas holds any advantages over Blackboard. The final transition will take place May 31, 2017, when Blackboard is officially retired.

Another change going on in UTM's online world is the UT Martin app. If you have updated your app, then you might have noticed a lot of changes from the old version to the current one. The new app is full of loves and hates. On the updated version, class rosters are no longer available for viewing, but there are more tabs with information regarding campus activities and news.

Another handy feature is the Campus Maps. While UTM is not the biggest campus, it can still be confusing for those who have just started here. It's easy to get turned around, especially when someone tells you something is by the administration building, but they don't specify which one.

The new app also holds a couple of new features not found on the old version. Sodexo has its own tab that lets you see what is going to be served that day, what is available in different locations and your meal plan balance. Barnes & Noble also has its own tab that allows you to shop for books and spirit wear all from the updated app on your phone. WUTM is available to stream right from the app, and there is a photo tab that allows anyone to access photos that other Skyhawks have taken around our beautiful campus.

These changes, like any, will bring out both positive and negative feedback on whether or not the app is good or bad; it will also bring out the opinions of those who prefer Blackboard to Canvas and vice versa. Either way that you look at it, changes are coming to the university's online life, whether the students like it or not.

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This newspaper is free in single copy and printed biweekly on Thursdays during the semester. Our press run is 1,000. The University of Tennessee at Martin earmarks $3.60 per enrolled student to pay for staff salaries and overhead costs of running our office. The cost of printing the newspaper is covered by advertising revenue.

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UTM Office of Student Publications

Viewpoints

COLUMNS

Why 'Black Lives Matter' to young white people

Dr. David Barber
Guest Writer

An open letter: the origin of 'Black Lives Matter'

In August 2014, a Ferguson Missouri police officer, Darren Wilson, shot and killed 18 year-old Michael Brown, pumping between six and eight rounds of ammunition into the unarmed Brown while firing off twelve rounds in total.

Immediately, people angrily gathered at the shooting scene with Brown's body lying on the pavement for four hours. Protests in Ferguson continued for several weeks after Brown's death and out of this death emerged the call for "Black Lives Matter."

In the heat of these protests the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) investigated the Brown case and later concluded that Darren Wilson had been justified in his use of deadly force. Even before that time, however, national media had thoroughly demonized Brown; and the truth is that just moments before he was killed Brown had robbed a convenience store of a few packs of cigarillos and had physically intimidated the store owner. For those folks who hate "Black Lives Matter" this ended the discussion: Michael Brown, they said, was a "thug" who assaulted Wilson and Wilson responded appropriately.

But I would like to suggest to you – and I ask that you hear me out – that even in the case of this angry young man, Michael Brown, the demand that this country acknowledge that Black Lives Matter is appropriate. Put another way, Michael Brown is dead today because in the United States, in this second decade of the 21st Century, black lives continue not to matter.

We can understand this by looking at the town in which Brown lived. First, Ferguson is two-thirds black, and a very poor community. In fact, following 2008's Great Recession the number of folks living under the government poverty level -- $23,492 for a family of four – reached one in four residents of the city. Those living under twice the poverty level constituted 44 percent of the city's population. Despite the fact that the city is predominantly black, at the time of Brown's death, the mayor, the police chief, and five of six of the city council members were white, and fifty of the fifty-three officers in Ferguson's police department were white.

Dr. David Barber.

On the other hand, despite the fact that 67 percent of Ferguson residents were black, 86 percent of those stopped in traffic stops were black, and 93 percent of those arrested during these stops were black. And it gets worse.

At the same time that the DOJ issued its report on Michael Brown's case the DOJ issued a second report, "Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department." In this report the DOJ argued that Ferguson based its law enforcement practices not on "public safety needs" but on the need for revenue – for making money off of fines and court fees. The DOJ determined that the "City budgets for sizeable increases in municipal fines and fees each year, exhorts police and court staff to deliver those revenue increases, and closely monitors whether those increases are achieved." After the start of the 2008 Great Recession, with sales tax revenue for the city plummeting, Ferguson's city fathers more and more heavily emphasized the need for the police to bring in additional money from fines and court fees.

As a result, from 2009 to 2014 both the number of traffic cases and non-traffic cases hauled in front of the Municipal Court doubled or nearly doubled – to 53,000 traffic cases and 50,000 non-traffic cases – and this, in a city of 21,000 people! If we figure that not all Ferguson residents are drivers, and that not all these traffic tickets were issued to Ferguson residents, still, every Ferguson driver must have received an average of three traffic citations in the year 2014. And remember, Ferguson police were encouraged to hand out these tickets not because of actual traffic violations, but because the city needed the money.

The DOJ report further insisted that Ferguson's structuring of its police policies around the need to raise revenue shaped "activities in all areas of policing, beyond just ticketing. Officers expect and demand compliance even when they lack legal authority. They are inclined to interpret the exercise of free-speech rights as unlawful disobedience, innocent movements as physical threats, indications of mental or physical illness as belligerence. Police supervisors ... do too little to ensure that officers act in accordance with law and policy, and rarely respond meaningfully to civilian complaints of officer misconduct. The result is a pattern of stops without reasonable suspicion and arrests without probable cause in violation of the Fourth Amendment; infringement on free expression, as well as retaliation for protected expression, in violation of the First Amendment; and excessive force in violation of the Fourth Amendment."

One example: a thirty-two-year-old black Ferguson resident had just finished a game of basketball and was cooling off in his car by the park. An FPD officer pulled up and accused the man of being a pedophile – children were playing in the park. After the man refused the officer's request to search his vehicle (it is legal to refuse to allow an officer to search your car unless the officer has a legitimate reason – "probable cause" – to suspect that some kind of crime has taken place), the officer arrested the man, reportedly at gunpoint, and charged him with eight violations of Ferguson's municipal code. Among these charges, the officer cited the man for "making a false declaration" – the man said his name was "Mike" instead of the name that appeared on his driver's license, Michael. The officer also cited "Mike" for failure to wear a seat belt – although, again, the man was seated in his car and not driving at the time the incident occurred.

The DOJ report also determined that the "municipal court does not act as neutral arbiter of the law or check on unlawful police conduct. Instead, the court primarily uses it judicial authority as a means to compel the payment of fines and fees that advance the City's financial interests." In 2013, for example, the Municipal Court issued over 9,000 warrants "stemming in large part from minor violations such as parking infractions, traffic tickets, or housing code violations." The Court "routinely issues warrants for people to be arrested and incarcerated for failing to timely pay related fines and fees."

One example: police issued two parking citations to a black woman in 2007. Fines for these citations reached $151, plus fees. The woman was poor, could not immediately pay the fines and fees, missed court dates, was issued Failure to Appear citations, was arrested twice, and spent six days in jail. On several occasions the Court refused partial payments. By 2014, seven years after the initial citations, the woman had paid out $550 in fines and she still owed $541 in additional fines and fees, all stemming from a $151 fine for illegal parking. Jailed twice and having to pay out over $1000 for a couple of parking tickets!

This is the community in which Michael Brown lived. I don't think I'm saying anything radical if I tell you that I'd be mad as hell living in that community – constantly being pulled over and disrespected by the police, being jailed for parking tickets, being jailed for protesting illegal searches of your car, being jailed for asking questions instead of simply obeying orders, and living in a community where most people are poor and very poor. Mad as hell. And I suspect you'd be pretty mad too. But mad or not, if you were black in that community, you'd still be screwed.

So, yes, Michael Brown was an angry young man. He was angry because in the community in which he lived, like black communities all up and down this land, black lives do not matter. He would not be dead today, and this country would not be in the turmoil it is in, if Black Lives Did Matter.

In my next letter I will discuss some more of the police murders of black people which have shaken this country in the last several years. And these people were killed not because they were angry but simply because they were black.

'Split' and the views of Dissociative Identity Disorder

Jillianne Moncrief
Staff Writer

Is it morally right to criticize people with mental disabilities and is it even ethically okay to portray these mental disabilities as harmful and dangerous when they are not?

If both of these answers are "no," then why does Hollywood keep making movies and TV shows with characters that have these disabilities, convincing the audience that every person with a mental illness is dangerous? Why does the audience keep watching without once thinking that there are people, friends and family even, who could have these illnesses? A new thriller or horror movie has come out, yet again, spilling the 'dangers' of a certain mental illness. This movie is Split.

Split is about a man with "Split Personality Disorder" or more commonly known as DID, dissociative identity disorder. In this movie, Kevin, played by James McAvoy, has 24 distinct personalities. While in one of his many characters, he jumps into a car with three young females and when they quickly question him, he knocks them out and locks them up in a windowless bunker. The females, and the audience, quickly learn that he has a personality disorder.

This movie, just up to this point, has already put a bad reputation on people with DID. It makes them look like they cannot be trusted and that they should be locked away because they are dangerous. However, they are not. This movie was based off of the most extreme aspects only.

"You are going to upset and potentially exacerbate symptoms in thousands of people who are already suffering," said Dr. Garrett Marie Deckel to CNN. Deckel is a DID specialist at Mount Sinai's Icahn School of Medicine.

Most patients with DID experience the other personalities as a coping mechanism. A high percentage of people with DID went through abuse, typically with no viable escapes, and their brain has reconfigured itself to 'escape' reality or at least the current situation to make them feel at ease.

Overall, the movie could be a great thriller or horror film, had it not made people scared of a disorder that may affect over 1% of Americans. More so, it not only makes people fear strangers or friends and family who have this disorder, but may make people who have the disorder feel like they don't belong and are a danger to the people around them. The movie Split was insensitive to people who suffer from this disorder on a daily basis.

News

Junk laws good for nothing but a laugh

Kristina Shaw
Managing Editor

If you ever wanted to try to catch a fish with a lasso, you can think again. In Tennessee, this is an illegal activity.

It is also illegal to share Netflix passwords; shoot any game from a moving vehicle, with the exception of whales; to hold state public office if you have been in a duel; have more than five inoperable vehicles on a piece of property; or for a woman to call a man for a date.

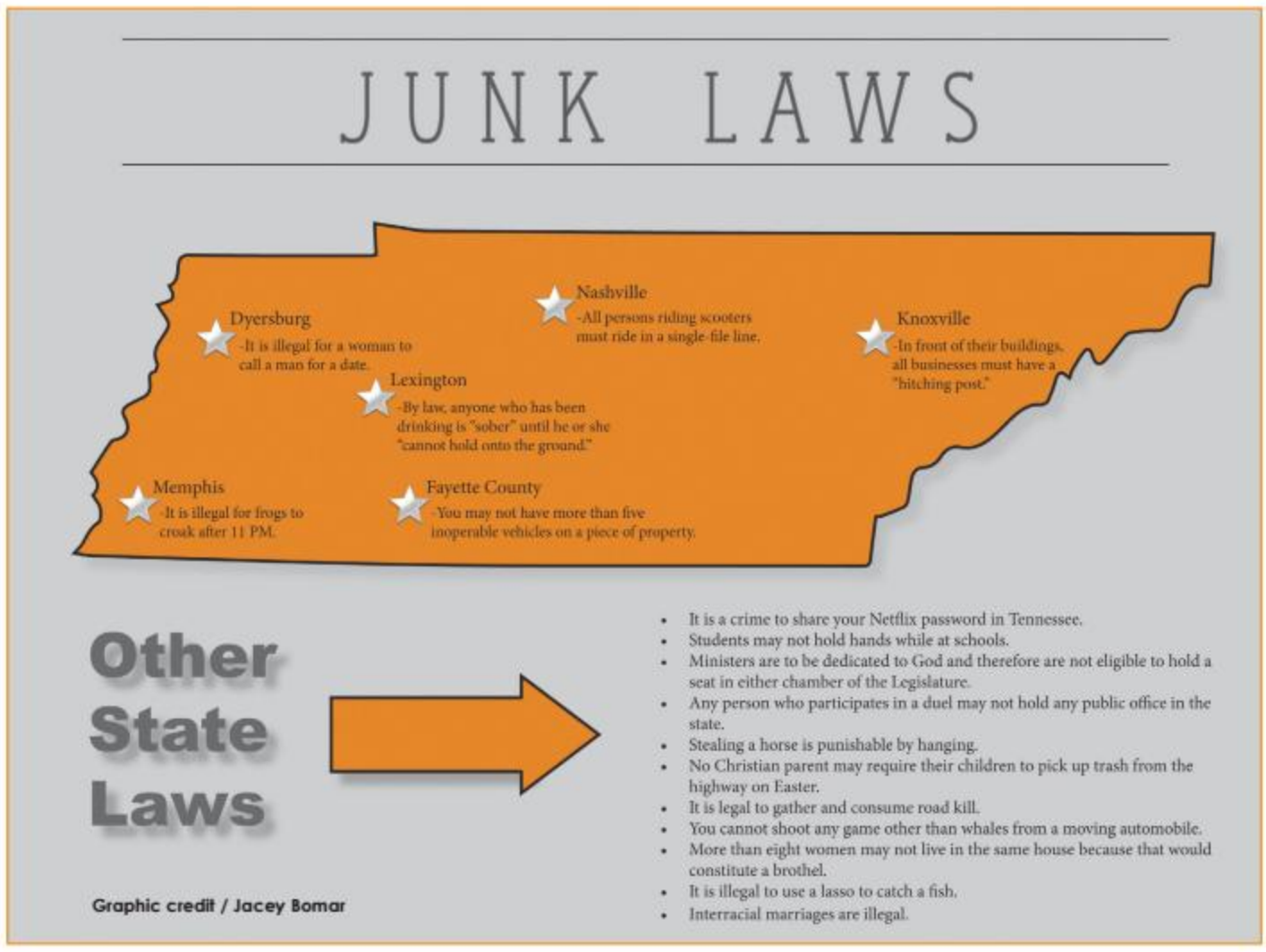
Outside of Tennessee, the list continues. Alabama prohibits bear wrestling. In Florida, if you tie your elephant to a parking meter, you must pay the fee like it would be paid for a car.

These laws may make a person stop and laugh or gape in awe, perhaps even a combination of both. However, they are still laws and are still on the books. Collectively these pieces of legislature are called "junk laws."

"Most of these tend to be fairly antiquated stuff," Dr. Christopher Baxter, UTM associate professor of Political Science, said when asked by the Communications 300 class during an interview in November. "There are a lot of these things that look odd or have been there for a hundred years, and nobody has just taken them off of the books."

Many of these laws concern religion, gender roles and relationship conduct, reflecting previous societal ways of thinking and providing historical context.

For example, in Indiana it is against the law to pass a horse in the street. Women are not allowed to wear patent leather shoes in public in Ohio or buy a hat without the permission of their husbands in Owensboro, Kentucky. In Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, attendees are not allowed to whisper in church.



Graphic credit / Jacey Bomar

In some cases, these junk laws are invalidated by the 14th Amendment.

"When courts reinterpret or take something off the books they say they're unconstitutional but technically the language of the law may still be there," Baxter said. "It's just not enforceable because the Supreme Court said you can't enforce that."

In light of the existence of these laws, the question "Why?" has many possible answers.

One of these potential answers is the process. Stripping a law from, in the case of the state of Tennessee, the TCA or Tennessee Code Annotated, is a long process. The TCA is the set of recorded laws that has been passed by the state legislature. It also contains an annotated segment where footnotes and references are added.

To be taken off the books, a law must go through the same process that it originally went through to become a law. Any changes made must be approved by the state House of Representatives and the Senate.

The governing state body, the General Assembly, meets once every two years for 180 days, beginning in January. To get a bill to be considered for review, it must first be sponsored by a member of Congress, who will then oversee the bill as it continues throughout the debate and voting processes. Bills are passed through the House and Senate after three separate readings. By day three, it is referred to committee by the chair. If it passes committee, it moves to the other body of government.

Additionally, there is a time constraint when this is done. Bills must be passed within their term of proposal, otherwise they die.

A law passed in 2013, sponsored by House Speaker Beth Harwell, poses another problem because it allows legislators to introduce a maximum of 15 bills a year.

"It's a long process," Baxter said. "Is it worth your time and effort if you know that it wouldn't last anyway?"

Obviously for most legislators, the answer is no.

Aviator

from Page 1

with potential scholarship opportunities funded by private donors.

By completing a general online application form, students are matched with qualified scholarships. The form accesses basic information from students' Banner profiles and allows students to discuss their extracurricular activities, community service, work experience and give a brief biography about themselves.

It is what Kim Cooper, in the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships, called a "one-stop shop" for scholarship information.

Cooper worked with donor-funded scholarships in the Office of Development for 17 years. She advised students on available funding and sent them to different locations to learn more.

"We were trying to find a way to make it easier for students to apply for scholarships," Cooper said.

Cooper, along with Mary Baker in Advancement Services, spent a year working with Academic Works and manually entering the awards. Academic Works is the only provider of its kind that works with the Ellucian Partner Program, which also runs the UTM Banner system.

"Getting the students aware of being able to apply to those scholarships is what gave us the motivation," Baker said.

The program was implemented for the first time in the fall of 2015, with a pilot test done the previous spring. It is entering its second year of use.

"It's really easy to use because you don't have to apply for a bunch of different scholarships," said Alleyah Allen, a freshman education major.

Once interested donors sign a gift agreement, the scholarship and its details are entered into the system. Departmental scholarship committees decide on award recipients after the application period ends. Chosen students then have their information processed through the Financial Aid office to ensure that they meet the qualifications of the fund.

However, in a small, anonymous man-on-the-street survey, out of 290 students questioned, 59.6 percent, or 173 students, did not know Aviator existed. Of this percentage, 103 students were juniors and seniors and 70 were freshmen and sophomores.

"It seems like they have very little advertising," said Clayton Hilton, a senior criminal justice student.

Of the 117 students who said they knew about Aviator, 46 said they had used it, 29 of whom were awarded scholarships.

The program lists five pages filled with tuition assistance and scholarship opportunities for different majors from all walks of life, and some of the scholarships have very specific requirements. Criteria are selected by donors.

These qualifications can be so narrow that there is not a student match in rare circumstances. However, in these rare circumstances members of the development office sift through applicants to find those who closely match and approach the donor.

"It's a great resource that we can have for students," said John Peale, a senior agriculture student.

The current submission deadline is Feb. 1.

To learn more about Aviator and fill out your application, visit https://utm.academicworks.com/ or stop by the Financial Aid office.

Laws

from Page 1

dealers, importers, law enforcement agencies or the agency's personnel will be exempt from criminal background checks upon the passing of the legislation.

H.B. 61 would also allow gun dealers to bypass background checks when selling their personal gun collections.

"The burden of proving the legality of any transaction or transfer ... is placed upon the transferor," said Rogers, the sponsor of the bill.

Several gun bills have been proposed already in the 2017 legislative session. These bills are expected to create deliberation among lawmakers as the 2017 legislative session continues.

Several house members have already declared their opposition toward the decrease in gun requirements. These lawmakers believe that strict enforcement is necessary to decrease gun-related deaths and injuries.

If passed, this legislation would take effect immediately upon the approval of the public welfare.

Arts & Entertainment

Feeling fit for the first time thanks to UTM Student Recreation Center

Tamara Beard
Co - News Editor

My muscles burned, my eyes stung from the sweat that seeped into them and my heart beat as quickly as the America's Top 40 song that played through the speakers.

My desire to quit was strong, but my desire to be healthy was stronger, so I kept cycling and focused on the colorful lights dancing on the walls. I am a senior, and this is my experience of taking my very first fitness class at the UTM Student Recreation Center.

When I decided to take a fitness class, I simply looked at the schedule and picked a random class that fit in my schedule—Cycle Fit. There were so many to choose from including Yoga, Ab Lab, Latin Dance Cardio and Spring Break Boot Camp. It was obvious that the recreation center was trying to reach a wide variety of students with different time preferences, interests and fitness abilities.

When I arrived at the classroom in the center, I was almost immediately ready to turn back around and go home. The soccer team was finishing up their cycling session and they were doing the workout with incredible speed at an almost perfect unison, that I thought that there was no way I could compare.

I decided to stay, however, and give the class a chance. We walked in and, with the assistance of the student instructor, set up our exercise bikes. Once everyone was ready, the instructor encouraged us to go at our own speed, but continue to try and push ourselves. The class started out at a comfortable pace and progressively got harder as time went on.

I would like to say that it was a fun and easy workout that made me feel great. In reality, it was an incredibly difficult workout that made me realize just how fun and easy it really is to sit on the couch and eat a bowl of brownie batter. That said, the feeling I get after licking the bowl clean can never compare to the feeling I had after this workout. It may have been difficult, but afterwards I felt energized, happy and really proud of myself for pushing through it. Basically, the way that I felt after the workout was worth the way I felt during it.

What I loved the most about the entire experience was the sense of community I got from everyone in the class. There was such a wide variety of people—women, men, black, white, thin, overweight—that you can almost be certain that someone else in the class relates to where you are in your life and in your fitness level. Nobody judged anybody else for their ability or lack thereof, and people did not hesitate to encourage the stranger next to them if they were struggling.

Photo Credit / Student Relations

Photo Credit / University Relations

The instructor of this particular class was also very helpful with her instructions, encouragement and advice. Her name is Megan Garrett, a senior Health & Human Performance major with a concentration in Exercise Science. Garrett is Athletic & Fitness Association of America (AFAA) certified and plans to go to graduate school for physical therapy. She loves teaching the fitness classes at the center and encourages others to participate in them.

"It's a fun way to get people interested in exercise," Garrett said.

If you have never taken a fitness class before, or perhaps only taken one or two, I encourage you to go to the Rec Center and try it out. If you are unsure where to start, I suggest taking a look at the class schedule and seeing what works best with your schedule. If you still are unsure what to take, Garrett advised starting with a resistance class, such as the Spring Break Boot Camp class. This class and others like it start at a low intensity and slowly build up. The Spring Break Boot Camp course is also an incentives program that includes rewards, such as door prizes, and keeps a record that allows students to see how much they have accomplished.

For more information on all the classes that the Student Recreation Center has to offer, visit their website at www.utm.edu/departments/campusrec.

Nintendo is 'Switch'ing it up

Lymonté Thomas
Staff Writer

On Jan. 17, 2017, in Tokyo, Japan, Nintendo presented the Nintendo Switch to the world in a press conference.

The console will launch with an initial selling price of $299.99.

The Nintendo Switch is a gaming console with a touch pad and joystick. This new gaming system is completely different from its predecessor, the Wii U. Though both consoles have a touch pad for game play, the Nintendo Switch has the capability of playing on the go as well as on a television screen.

The Switch also has detachable joysticks called Joy-Cons on the side of the touchpad for single- and multiplayer use. The Joy-Cons can be used for vertical and horizontal purposes. Both of the Joy-Con controllers can also be put together into the joy grip for a more traditional style of gaming.

These portable qualities are something new for larger Nintendo gaming systems. All of the Switch's predecessors are larger, stationary systems.

However, the touchpad screen can be taken out of its docking stand and taken on the go with six hours of battery life. The gaming system does not have a CD reader, rather, it has a card reader, similar to the company's portable 3DS line. The compact format is intended make games easier to carry on the go.

Players will also be able to link up to eight systems for multiplayer use that have traditionally helped stationary systems remain popular.

New versions of "Nintendo classic" games launching with or shortly after the system is released include "Splatoon 2", "The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild", and several other titles. One of the more notable titles with a host of iconic characters is "Mario Kart 8 Deluxe", an updated of the Wii U title featuring all the downloadable content of the original game, as well as additional game modes and playable characters.

A large number of new games previously unaffiliated with Nintendo will be coming out during the system's first year as well, including already existing giants like "The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim."

The Nintendo Switch will be available in stores March 3, 2017.

The brand new Nintendo Switch Console, to be released in the U.S. this spring. | **Photo Credit/ Nintendo Inc.**

Three reasons for TV fans to say TGIT again

Barriana Woods
PR Chair

Fans everywhere are excited for the return of TGIT tonight!

TGIT (Thank God it's Thursday) has become the catchphrase for ABC's Thursday night television series line-up: Greys Anatomy, Scandal, and How to Get Away with Murder.

The original premiere date for the line-up was January 19th but it was delayed for a 20/20 pre-Inauguration special that was aired that night on ABC. However, fans of the production company Shondaland were patient. What was one more week, right?

It's been a while since the addictive trinity has been aired together, because Scandal was benched for the winter as main character, Olivia Pope (Kerry Washington), prepared to give birth to her second child.

The last season ended with the Gladiators being in the midst of a very hectic, jaw-dropping election year, much like us in the real world. Cryus Bean (Jeff Perry) is going against Mellie Grant (Bellamy Young) and that alone says that all viewers should expect the unexpected.

While the wait hasn't been as long for Grey's Anatomy and How to Get Away with Murder, the winter finales left fans boiling with anticipation.

On How to Get Away with Murder, we all have one question – who killed Wes? Annalise Keating (Viola Davis) was taken into custody for his murder, however that doesn't mean anything when Shonda Rhimes is the producer.

As for Grey's Anatomy, the question is will Meredith Grey (Ellen Pompeo) and Alex Karev (Justin Chambers) take their friendship to the next level?

In the medical drama (Grey's), political drama (Scandal), and legal drama (HTGAWM), the producer of all 3 shows, Shonda Rhimes, makes it impossible for fans predict what will happen next. We are on the edge of our seats: let's get ready for crazy!

Grab some popcorn and friends and tune into ABC, starting at 8|7c with Grey's Anatomy, and get ready to dive into the world of Shondaland.

Arts & Entertainment

'Greatest Show on Earth' closes its curtains for the last time

Brooke Boshers
Staff Writer

Due to high costs and a decrease in ticket sales, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's "The Greatest Show on Earth" will not go on.

Feld Entertainment, the owner of the circus for over 50 years, announced on Jan. 14, 2017, in a press release that the circus would be holding its last shows on May 7 at the Dunkin' Donuts Center in Providence, Rhode Island, and May 21 at the Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Uniondale, New York.

Ending its attempt to provide family entertainment for the last 146 years, the circus could not gain the momentum needed to profitably continue their business after deciding to remove Asian elephants from the show.

On March 15, 2016, the company announced its plans to take out this endangered species from the circus and relocate them to the Ringling Bros. Center for Elephant Conservation, home to the largest herd of Asian elephants in the Western Hemisphere.

The company's original plan intended for the 13 elephants remaining in the traveling show to be removed by 2018; however, the circus will end before this time comes.

At the conservation in Florida, the Feld family works to save the species from extinction, as well as support the search for a cure for diseases that affect young elephants.

Despite Feld Entertainment's work towards the preservation of the species, animal rights activists, including People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), have petitioned for years for the removal of the elephants from the show.

These groups accuse Ringling Bros. of abusing the animals by making them perform tricks and using bullhooks, a tool used to train the elephants through physical punishment.

"By its very design, the bullhook is meant to inflict pain and instill fear. The use of this archaic and inhumane weapon on elephants – a species that is self-aware, intelligent and emotional - is abhorrent," said president and co-founder of the Performing Animals Wellfare Society, Ed Stewart.

"PAWS thanks California legislators and Gov. Brown for leading the way and providing elephants with the respect and protection they deserve."

Photo Credit / FilmMagic

The use of bullhooks has been prohibited in large cities including Los Angeles and Oakland, California, where the circus no longer visits.

In Feld Entertainment's official press release, Juliette Feld, the Chief Operating Officer of the company, said, "This was a difficult business decision to make, but by ending the circus tours, we will be able to concentrate on the other lines of business within the Feld Entertainment portfolio."

Feld Entertainment's other lines of business include, but are not limited to, AMSOIL Arenacross, Monster Jam, Marvel Universe LIVE!, Monster Energy Supercross and Disney On Ice.

"Now that we have made this decision, as a company, and as a family, we will strive to support our circus performers and crew in making the transition to new opportunities," said Feld Entertainment as they pledge their loyal support to those employed by Ringling Bros.

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Sports

New track team leaves school records in the dust

Tamara Beard
Co-News Editor

UTM has an official track team this semester for the first time in 15 years, and it is already leaving its footprint in UTM athletics history.

The track team started its latest debut during the Jan. 13-15 weekend at the Vanderbilt Commodore Invitational. At this event, several school records were broken and many runners beat their personal-bests. Notably, UTM senior Ann Asipan broke the program's previous 5k record of 18:25.4 set in 2003 with a time of 16:54.47. During the men's 5k, freshman Edwin Kurgat also beat a previous program record by more than 32 seconds. Both athletes finished second overall in their respective races.

Other athletes who beat previous school records include freshmen Ryan Ford in the men's 3k and Kara Martin in the mile run. Runners who surpassed their personal-best records include freshman Marcos Macias and Kara Martin. Moreover, freshman Jasmine Pitcher beat a team-best time of 8.27 seconds in the 60-meter race.

Peter Dalton, Cross County and Track coach, seemed happy with the weekend's results and optimistic about the team's hard work in the future.

"It is nice to finally say that track is officially back," said Dalton to the Sports Information department, "While this was a great starting point for our reintroduced program, we still have a lot of work to do. With that being said, I am excited for what the future holds for the Skyhawks."

The track team continued their successful streak at the John Craft Invite at Eastern Illinois University over the January 22nd weekend.

At this event, the woman's Distance Medley Relay (DMR) was won by the UTM team of Emma Edmonds, Pitcher, Martin, and Asipan with a time of 12:20.27. This win also broke the school record for this event set in 1998. The men's DMR team consisted of Leonel Perez, Jonathan Conley, Ford, and Rogers and was completed in a record-breaking time of 10:32.64.

Both Ford and Rogers also broke the program's previous mile time record with times of 4:22.83 and 4:21.97 respectively. Rogers now ranks as the program's leader in the mile event.

Other records that were broken at the John Craft Invite include the women's 5k by Asipan, the men's 3k by Kurgat, and the women's 600-meter run by Agok Ayuen. Kara Martin, Amelia Martin, and Marcos Marcias all set personal-best records in their 3k events.

Coach Dalton was proud of the team's fast-paced progress in such a short amount of time.

"In just one short week we can already see the progression starting to happen for the entire team," said Dalton to the Sports Information department, "We are certainly moving in a positive direction."

The Skyhawks will compete again in the upcoming weeks at the Don Denoon Invite in Illinois on Saturday, Feb. 4.

2017 Super Bowl: battle of the offenses

Matt Herod
Sports Editor

The Super Bowl is set, and looks to be a high scoring affair involving two of the hottest offenses in football. The Falcons will be led by, who many would say, is the front runner for MVP of the league, quarterback Matt Ryan.

On the other side, the Patriots will be led by future hall of fame quarterback Tom Brady, who finds himself in familiar territory, this being his seventh appearance in the Super Bowl. Both the Falcons and Patriots defenses will have their hands full, and pressure on the two quarterbacks might just be the key to victory.

In the NFC championship, the Falcons were coming off of a convincing 36-20 win over a Seattle defense that's been one of the best in the league in past years. Their opponents, the Green Bay Packers, were coming off of a thrilling victory over the Cowboys whose late comeback fell short as Green Bay kicked a 51 yard field goal as time expired to win 34-31.

Many thought that the matchup between Matt Ryan and Aaron Rodgers would be a battle to the finish, both having strong years at the Quarterback position. Atlanta's opening drive ended in a touchdown shovel pass from Matt Ryan to Muhammed Sanu, their eighth straight touchdown on an opening drive.

Green Bay's opening drive would turn out to be a foreshadowing of how the game would ultimately go for the Packers all afternoon, as Mason Crosby missed his first field goal attempt of the game.

The next time Green Bay got the ball, they rolled down the field looking like they were determined to get in the end zone, but fullback Aaron Ripkowski fumbled the ball near the 5 yard line and the Falcons recovered it in the end zone.

Photo Credit/ scoopnest.com

The Falcons next offensive drive would end in a 14 yard touchdown run by Matt Ryan to make it 17-0, and Atlanta's offense was officially rolling.

With 1:50 left in the first half Aaron Rodgers would throw a bomb to Jordy Nelson, but it was intercepted by Falcons DB Ricardo Allen. To end the half, Matt Ryan threw a 5 yard touchdown pass to Julio Jones to make the score 24-0 at halftime.

Speedwash America is offering Drop-Off service to the Students of UT Martin. If you would like to participate Speedwash will be picking up Laundry @ the University 3 times a week effective January 17,2017. Please visit our website to complete your request form @ speedwashamerica.com/contact/

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Locations:

- Browing (Tuesday Pickup)
- Cooper Hall (Wednesday Pickup)
- Ellington (Thursday Pickup)

Around the NEST

Men's Basketball

8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 26 -- at Austin Peay
7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 28 -- at Murray State
7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 1 -- at Tennessee Tech
6 p.m. Saturday Feb. 4 -- Eastern Kentucky, Elam Center, Martin, Tennessee

Women's Basketball

5 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 28 - at Murray State
5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 1- at Tennessee Tech
4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 4 -- Eastern Kentucky
Elam Center, Martin, Tennessee
6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 8 -- Eastern Illinois, Elam Center, Martin, Tennessee

Track

TBA Saturday, Feb. 4 -- Carbondale, Illinois -- Indoor Track at Don Denoon Invite

Rifle

TBA Saturday, Feb. 4 -- at OVC Championships (Morehead, Ky.)
TBA Sunday, Feb. 5 -- at OVC Championships (Morehead, Ky.)

Tennis

3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 4 -- at Middle Tennessee

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